



HOW TO CREATE CORE VALUES

5 Steps for Developing and Communicating
Your Company's Guiding Principles

1

SELF-EMPLOYED MENTALITY



This isn't a J-O-B. We all act like we own the place.

2

SHOOT SACRED COWS



We stick by our principles. We challenge traditions.

3

SHARE THE PROFITS



We win together. We lose together.

HOW TO CREATE CORE VALUES

5 STEPS FOR DEVELOPING AND COMMUNICATING YOUR COMPANY'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At the heart of every company lies its core values—the operating principles that permeate every area of a business. They reflect what's truly important to a business and its leader, and they're a guide for team member behaviors.

Running a company without identifying what matters most is like hiking without a compass. You'll soon be lost. So how do you create them? This field guide is going to be your compass for coming up with a list of core values for your business. Use these five steps to develop your organization's own true north.

4

MOMENTUM THEOREM



We know that focused intensity over time, multiplied by God, creates Unstoppable Momentum.

5

RIGHTEOUS LIVING



We believe character matters. All the time.

6

FEAR NOT



We don't make decisions based on fear.

1. START WITH YOUR OWN

Before you create core values for your organization, you need to identify the things you personally hold sacred. Why take the time? As a small-business owner, your principles are the framework of your company. What you believe is directly reflected in your business. The two need to align. To get you started, here are a few sample questions to ask yourself:

- » **What is most important to me in my life?**
- » **What are the guiding principles I identify with?**
- » **What are the core values I practice each day?**
- » **What values would I like to live but I'm not actually achieving?**
- » **What does success look like to me?**

This first step is incredibly important since it builds the foundation for your company. Don't rush it. Take a few days and find some quiet time to think. Write down as many as possible and then pare the list down to your top five. To make sure you are on the right track, include your spouse in the process, since he or she is the one who knows you best.

7

NO GOSSIP



We pass negatives up and positives all around.

8

TEAM



We are team members, not employees.

9

CRUSADE



We are crusaders doing work that matters.

2. GET LEADERSHIP INPUT

Now that you have your personal core values, it's time to draft company principles that align with them. Calendar at least a half of a day or more to meet with your top leaders to brainstorm what's important to you and your team. Schedule the meeting at least a week or two in advance so your key players have time to seriously think too. At the meeting:

- » Ask each person to describe their personal core values and why they are important.
- » Break up into teams and have each group write on sticky notes five phrases that describe what they believe are your current core values and five phrases for your dream guiding principles on another color. Each team then picks their top five from each category to share with the entire group.
- » Place the sticky notes on the meeting room walls or white board.
- » Discuss each idea in depth.
- » Pull down ideas that won't work, whittling down your notes to only the top 10. They should include core values that are already part of your company's culture and what you would like to become in the future.

10

EXCELLENCE IN THE ORDINARY



We are faithful in the little things.

11

FAMILY



We balance family and working hard.

12

NEVER GIVE UP



We impose our will on the marketplace.

3. ASK YOUR TEAM

Once your list is complete, send it to your employees to get their feedback. Remember to describe each value so everyone is clear.

Why take this step? It helps with buy-in by your entire team, who will be playing a part in developing your core values. Plus, you want the people who are on the front lines every day involved since they know, more than anyone, what's going on. They may also have ideas you've never even thought of.

Quick Tip: Reassure your team members that you truly welcome feedback and their suggestions will be considered. Also include how important this exercise is for everyone on the team and the company as a whole.

4. MEET AGAIN

Now that you have input from everyone, set up another meeting with your leaders to finalize your list. We know. You're busy. But we promise, the ROI on this is worth the additional investment of time.

Quick Tip: Keep it simple. You want your core values to mean something, not confuse everyone with flowery, corporate language. Each Ramsey Solutions core value is described in just a handful of words.

13

QBQ



Taking responsibility is who we are.

14

WE DO OUR WORK
AS UNTO THE LORD



Colossians 3:23

15

MARKETPLACE
SERVICE



*If we help enough people,
we don't have to worry about money.*

5. MAKE THEM STICK

Walk through Ramsey Solutions headquarters and you'll quickly realize how important core values are here. They're plastered everywhere, from the walls to coffee mugs to T-shirts—even slides before every company weekly meeting. And the team? They've heard and seen them so much, they can practically recite every one from memory.

Talk about your core values every chance you get, then do it again until they are ingrained in your team's brains. But that's just the start. Your core values are just words unless you back them up with real-world action, starting with you. Be the example. No one wants to read that you care for your team when everyone knows they are last on your list of priorities.

Quick Tip: One of our favorite pieces of advice for sharing your core values is from EntreLeadership Coach John Felkins. He says the biggest mistake you can make is to read your core values to your team. You'll put everyone to sleep.

"Look for opportunities to recognize people who are exemplifying your core values," he says. "One of our core values is taking personal responsibility. If Dave hears about or sees someone doing that, he's going to talk about what they've done. It takes a little bit more effort and you have to pay attention to what's going on, but it's worth it."

NEXT STEPS

To help you on your path to becoming a better business leader, check out the resources EntreLeadership has to offer:

ENTRELEADERSHIP PODCAST

Our highly rated EntreLeadership Podcast features interviews with some of the top business and thought leaders across the country. EntreLeadership.com/podcast

ENTRELEADERSHIP ADVISOR

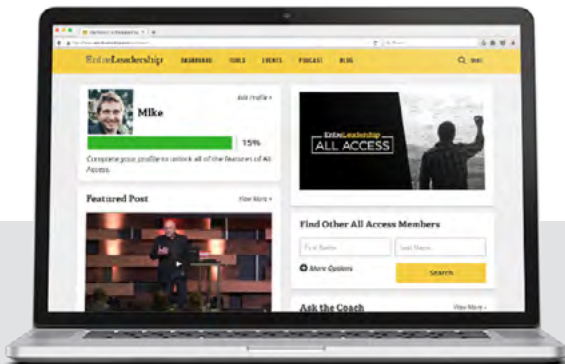
Watch your email inbox to receive Dave Ramsey's EntreLeadership newsletter twice a month.

UPCOMING EVENTS

EntreLeadership 1-Day: EntreLeadership.com/E1D

EntreLeadership Summit: EntreLeadership.com/Summit

EntreLeadership Master Series: EntreLeadership.com/EMS



EntreLeadership
ALL ACCESS

Want to put into place the principles you've learned today?

All Access, our coaching program, features:

- » Weekly eCoaching with on-demand playback
- » Mastermind groups with fellow small-business owners
- » EntreLeadership Master Series video lessons
- » Access to our coaches via office hours

EntreLeadership.com/allaccess